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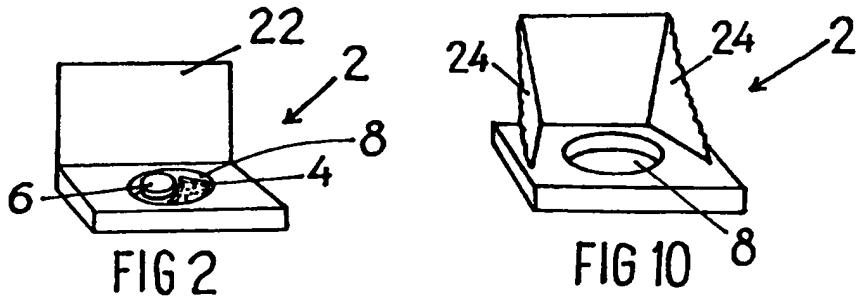
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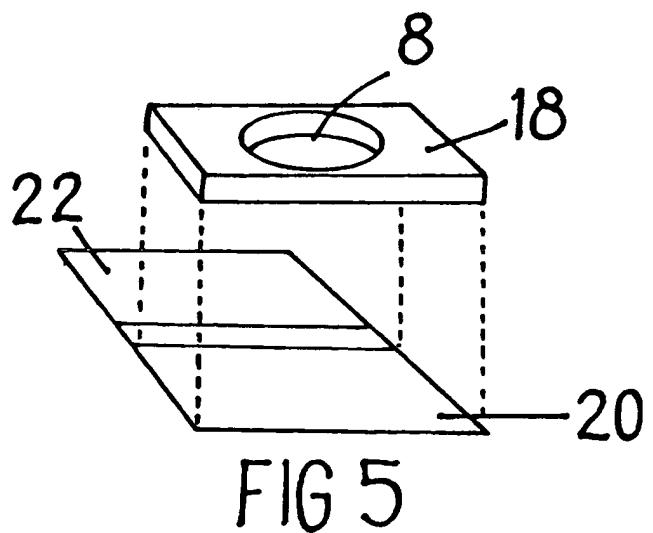
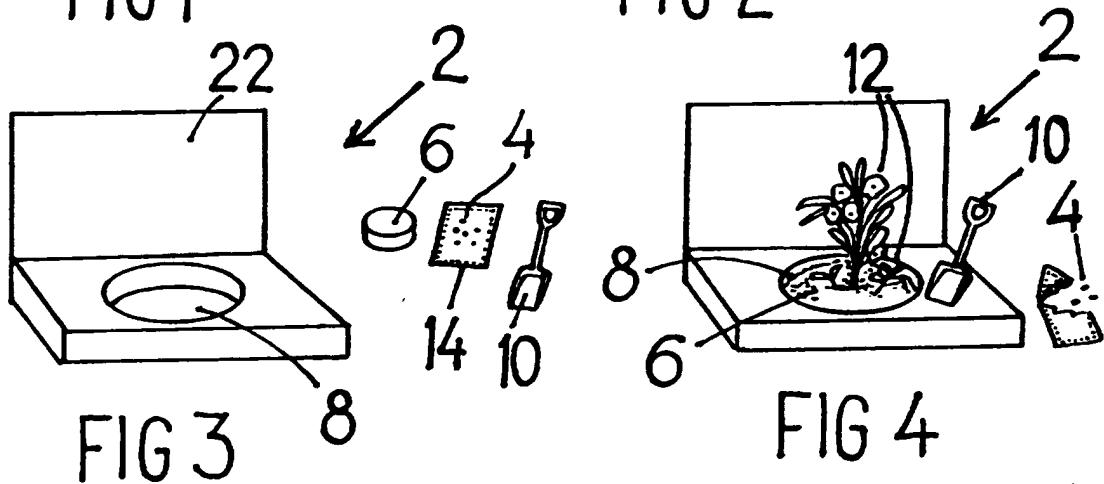
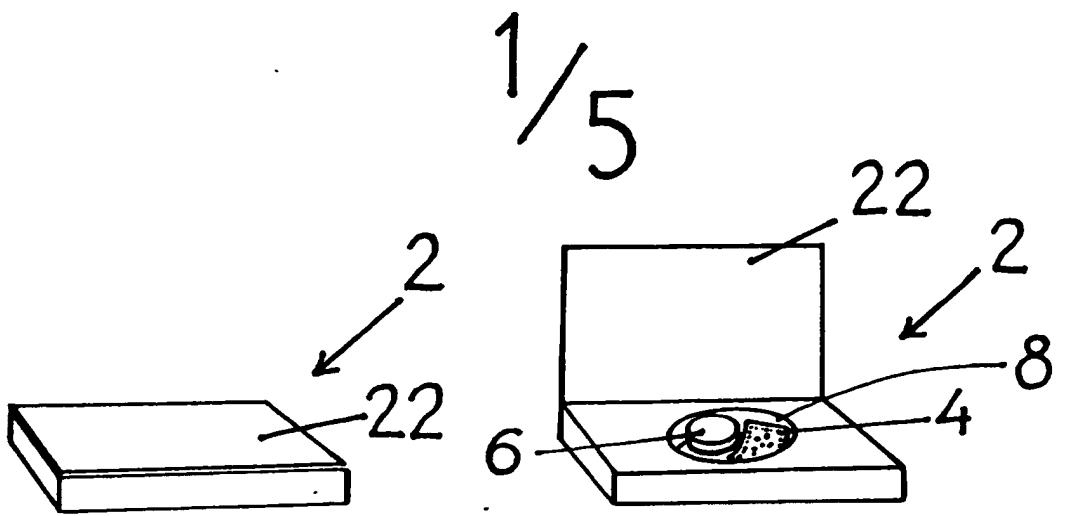
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UK CL (Edition O) B6A ADE
INT CL^b B42D 15/04
Online databases: WPI

(54) A greetings card with plant seeds and soil

(57) The greetings card 2 comprises plant seeds 4, a soil substance 6, and a plant growing area 8, the card being such that in use the seeds are planted in the soil substance in the plant growing area whereby the card forms an enhancing display for the plant growing area and the plants therein. The greetings card and/or the plant growing area are such that watering of the soil substance for plant growing purposes does not cause the card to decompose before the plants have grown. The card (Fig 10) may have fold-out portions 24. In addition the card may include a gardening tool.



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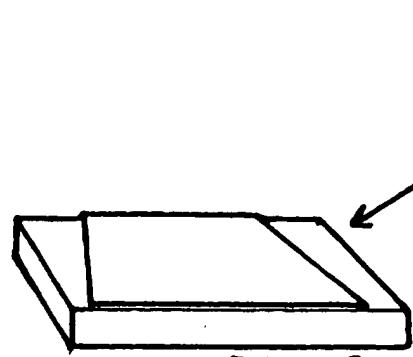


FIG 6

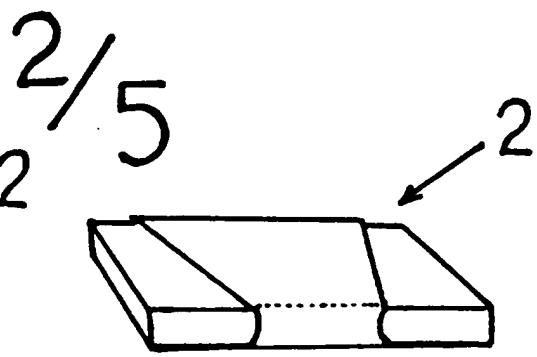


FIG 7

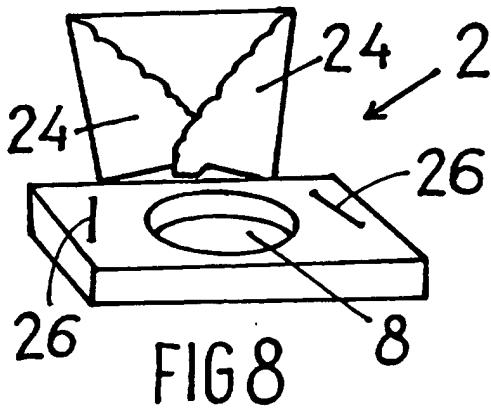


FIG 8

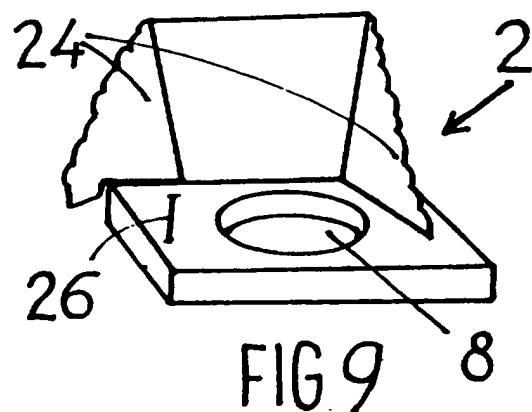


FIG 9

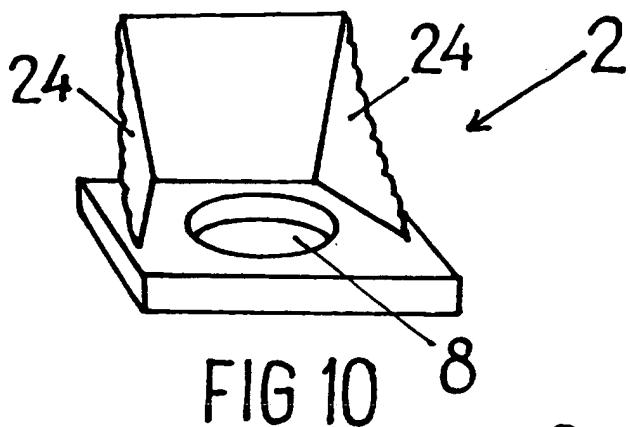


FIG 10

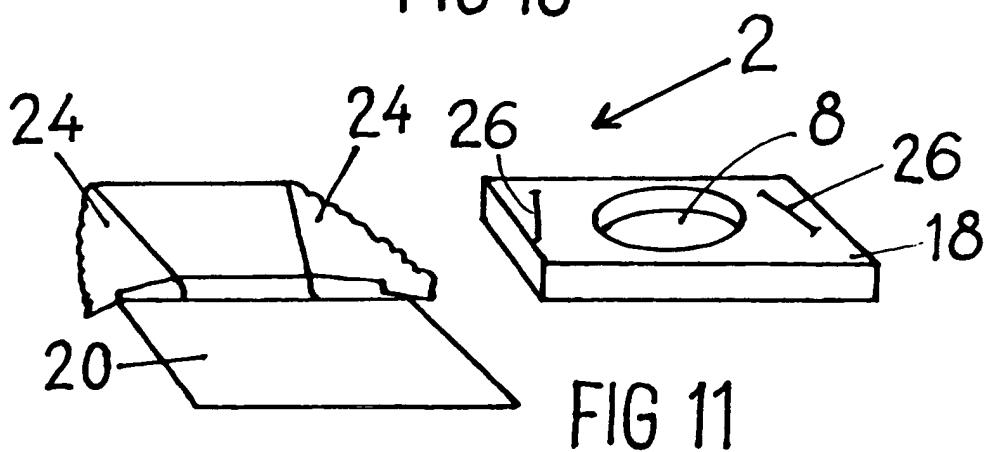
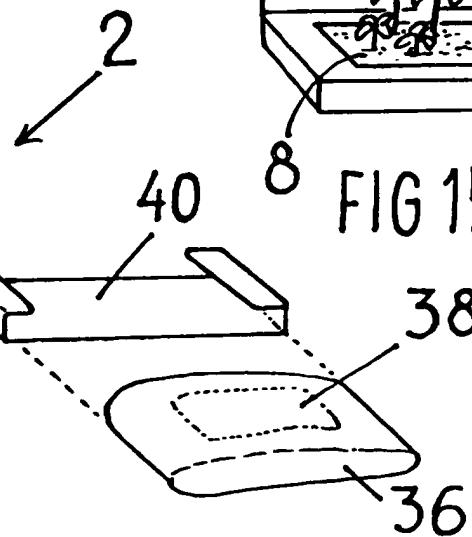
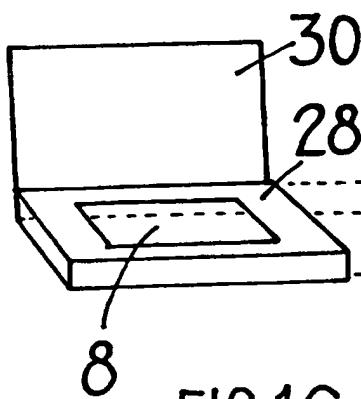
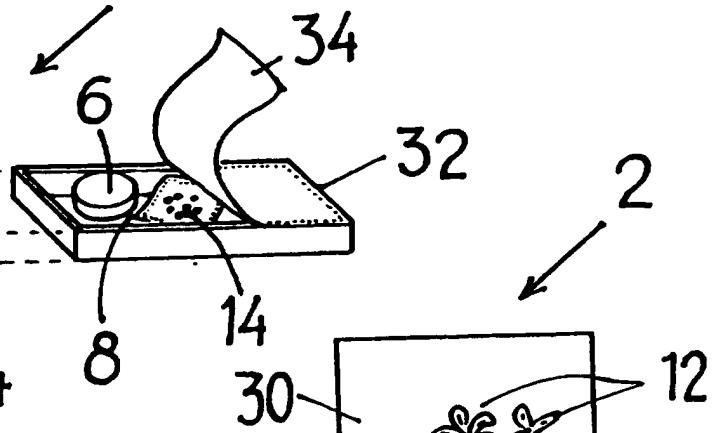
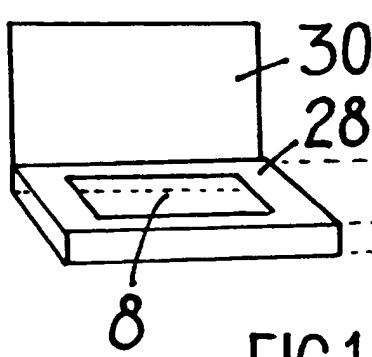
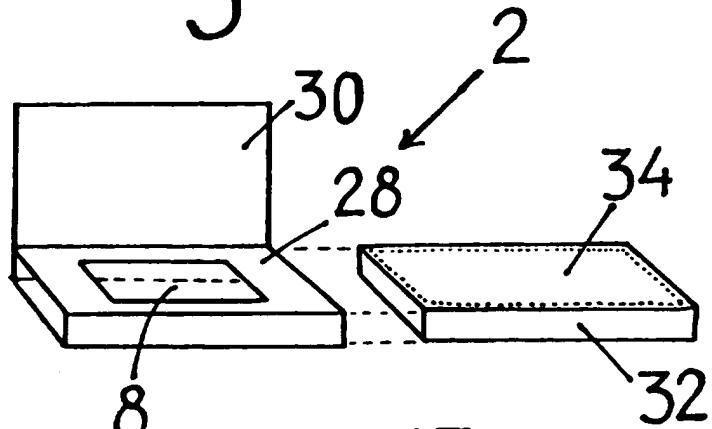
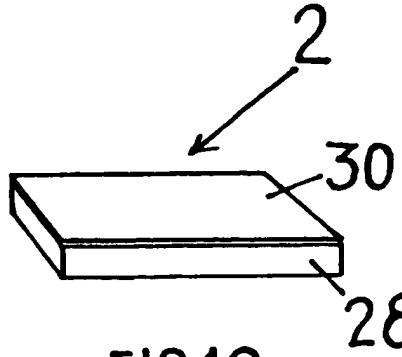
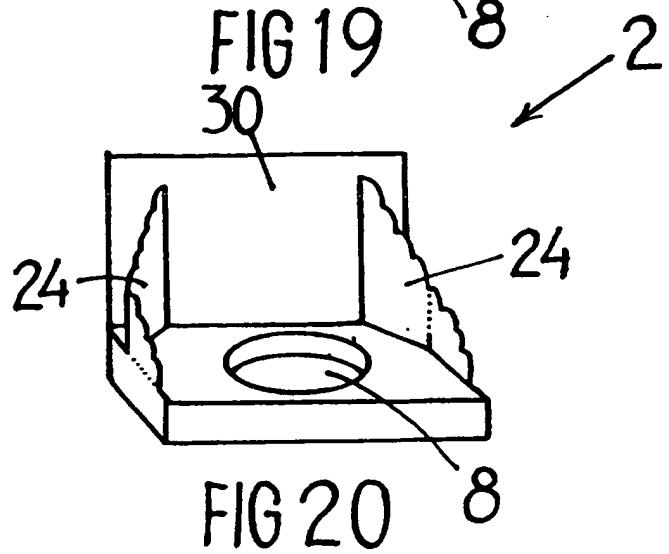
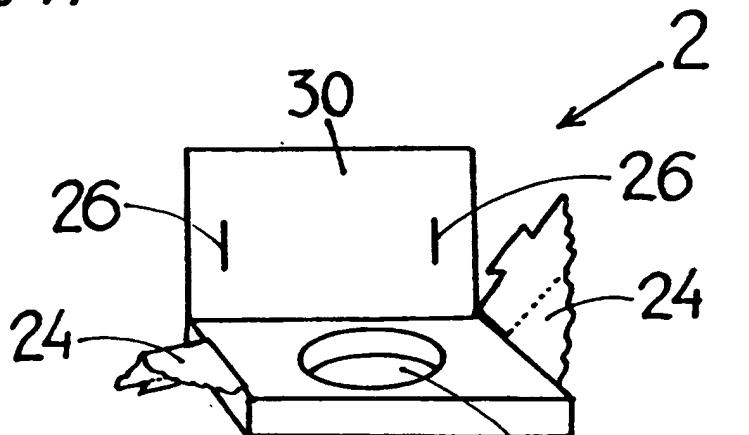
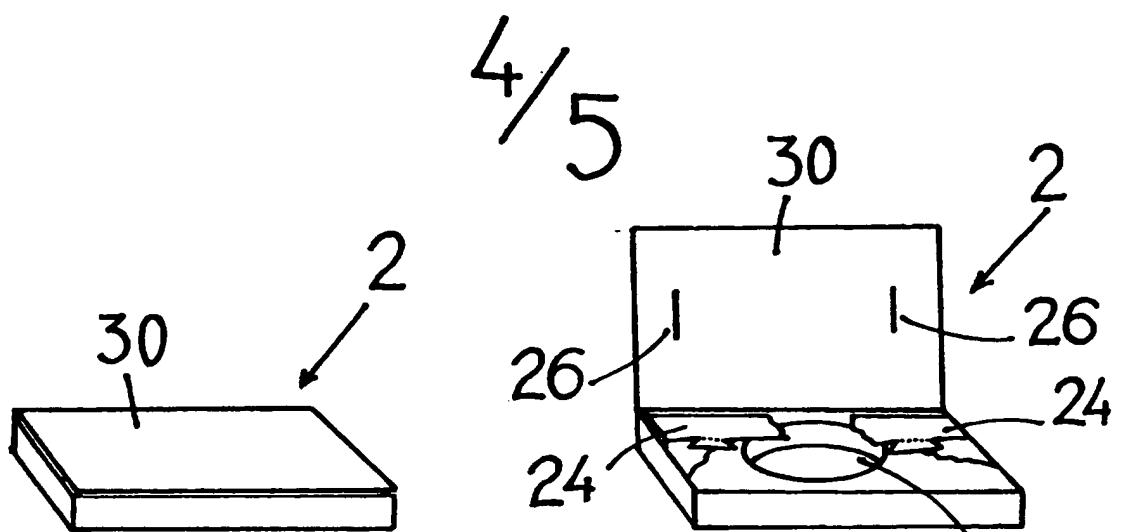


FIG 11

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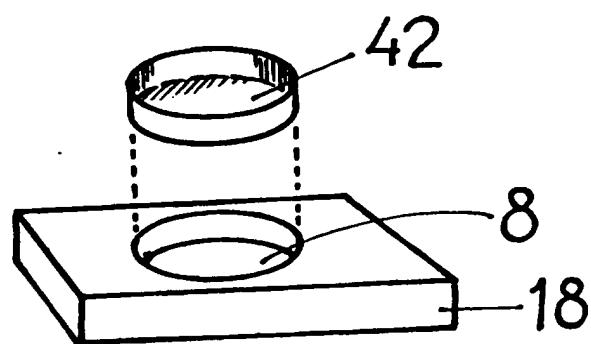


FIG 21

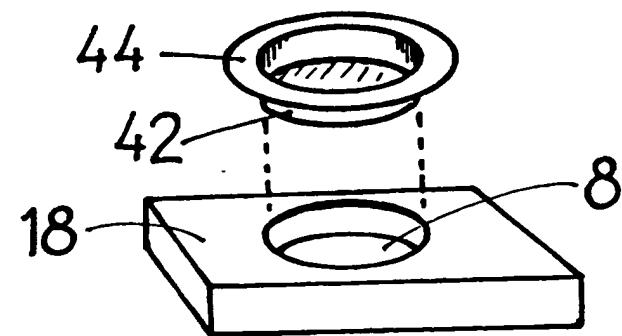


FIG 22

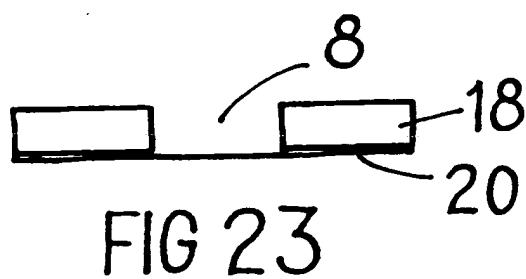


FIG 23

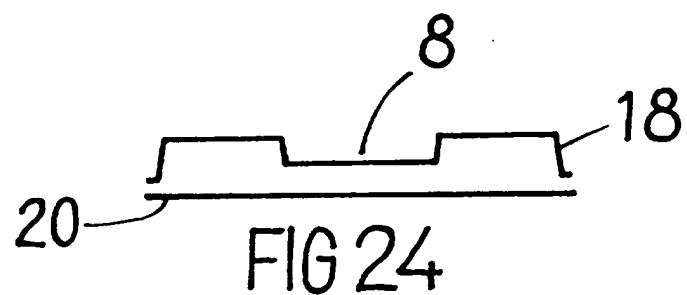


FIG 24

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A GREETINGS CARD

This invention relates to a greetings card and, more especially, this invention relates to a greetings card which contains plant seeds.

Greeting cards which contain plant seeds are known. One such known greetings card contains seeds in sachets for planting by a recipient of the greetings cards. Another known greetings card contains the seeds in the form of seed mats for planting out by the recipient of the greetings card. The seed mats are formed by sandwiching the seeds between layers of biodegradable paper tissue. A further known greetings card has seeds embedded in the card material. The entire card is planted by the recipient of the greetings card.

The known greetings cards that contain seeds are such that the greetings cards are basically used just to send the seeds. Once the recipient has planted the seeds, the card has no more use. It would be a considerable advantage if the greetings card and the seeds could be so connected that after planting of the seeds, the greetings card was able to remain visually associated with the seeds and with plants grown therefrom, thereby enabling the recipient of the greetings card to have a constant reminder of the

sender of the greetings card whilst the seeds are germinating and whilst the plants from the seeds are growing. It is an aim of the present invention to provide such a greetings card.

Accordingly, in one non-limiting embodiment of the present invention there is provided a greetings card which comprises plant seeds, a soil substance, and a plant growing area, the greetings card being such that in use the plant seeds are planted in the soil substance in the plant growing area and are grown in the plant growing area whereby the greetings card forms an enhancing display for the plant growing area and the plants therein, and the greetings card and/or the plant growing area being such that watering of the soil substance for plant growing purposes does not cause the greetings card to decompose before the plants have grown.

In addition to the greetings card being able to form an enhancing display for the plants, the greetings card is able to serve as a constant reminder to the recipient of the sender and the message. The greetings card thus becomes an interactive device which is with the recipient for the duration of the life of the plants and which requires the recipient to take action and become a part of the plant growing process. The greetings card may be used to form a

miniature garden. In effect, because the greetings card stays with the plant seeds whilst the plants are being grown, the miniature garden becomes a mailable gift item.

The plant seeds may be seeds for flowering plants and non-flowering plants. Any suitable and appropriate type of plants may be contained in the greetings card. Examples of non-flowering plants are herbs such for example as parsley and basil. The plants may be such that the greetings card can form a flower garden or a vegetable garden.

The plant seeds may be of the same plant variety, or they may be of different plant varieties. Thus, for example, the greetings card may be used to form a flower garden and a vegetable garden, or a flower garden having a mixture of flowers, or a vegetable garden having a mixture of vegetables.

Usually, the seeds will be packed in a sealed seed container. The sealed seed container is preferably a sealed sachet. Other types of container may however be employed.

The soil substance may be one or more of earth, compost, coconut hair, peat, moss and sand. Generally, the soil substance can be any suitable and appropriate type of soil substance for growing the

plants. Different types of plants may benefit from different types of soil substances.

If desired, the soil substance may be a compressed dried soil substance which becomes suitable for growing the plants when it is provided with water, and which expands in volume when it receives the water. Such a compressed soil substance may be advantageously in the form of one or more tablets.

If desired, the soil substance may be in a bag made of a plastics material, the bag being such that a hole can be cut in the bag whereupon the bag becomes a suitable receptacle from which to grow the plants. The bag thus becomes a growing bag.

The soil substance is preferably packed in a sealed soil substance container. The sealed soil substance container is preferably a sachet. Other types of sealed soil substance container may however be employed.

The plant growing area may be a recess in a body part of the greetings card. The recess may contain the soil substance in a growing bag as mentioned above. Alternatively, the recess may contain the soil substance in a container such for example as a tray. The recess may be of any suitable size and shape. Where a container is employed, then the container should be light, rigid and waterproof. The container

may thus be made from a closed cell foam such for example as polyethylene or polystyrene. The container may also be made from injection moulded or vacuum formed plastics materials. Other materials may be employed if desired.

If desired, the recess may be lined with a plastics or metal foil material. Generally, any suitable and appropriate construction may be employed to enable the plant growing area to retain moisture from watering such that water does not run or seep away from the greetings card and thus possibly damage surfaces on which the greetings card is standing during the plant growing process.

The greeting card may be made of card, a heavy weight paper-board, or a plastics material. The greetings card can be made of any suitable and appropriate materials. The greetings card will normally be made of a material which can be printed on and/or written on. It is preferred that the greetings card is able to be written on so that persons can write personalised messages on the greetings card. If desired, the greetings card may be sold without any pre-printed greetings so that it can then be provided with a personalised written greeting from a sender to a recipient.

The greetings card may be provided with a water-resistant covering at least on its side adjacent the plant growing area. The water-resistant covering may help the greetings card to withstand water from watering, for example if the watering is effected by a spray and the spray tends to be applied in a somewhat inaccurate manner, or if too much water is applied from a glass or other container. The water-resistant layer may be a layer of a plastics material, a layer of silicone, or a layer of varnish. If desired, the card may be laminated in order to increase its resistance to moisture.

Preferably, the greetings card is one which is able to give a three dimensional display whilst the plants are growing. In this case, the greetings card may be one which has fold-out portions which are folded out to be able to give a three dimensional display.

The greetings card may be of any suitable and appropriate size and with any suitable type of message and/or greeting, for example as appropriate for Christmas, Birthdays, Valentines Day, Easter, Anniversaries and general occasions. As indicated above, the greetings card will usually have a blank space for enabling a personalised message to be written. If desired, the greetings card may be sold

without any pre-printed greeting on it so that a sender can then write a personalised message to the recipient on the greetings card.

The greetings card may include at least one gardening tool. The gardening tool or tools may be for planting the seeds and/or for tending the plants. The gardening tool or tools may be enclosed for aesthetic purposes and/or practical purposes. Examples of tools that may be included are a miniature spade, a miniature rake and miniature shears.

Embodiments of the invention will now be described solely by way of example and with reference to the accompanying drawings in which:

Figures 1 - 5 show a first greetings card;

Figures 6 - 11 show a second greetings card;

Figures 12 - 15 show a third greetings card;

Figure 16 shows a fourth greetings card;

Figures 17 - 20 show a fifth greetings card;

Figure 21 shows part of a sixth greetings card;

Figure 22 shows part of a seventh greetings card;

and

Figures 23 and 24 illustrate alternative ways of forming part of the greetings card to receive a plant growing area.

Referring to Figures 1 - 5, there is shown a greetings card 2 which comprises plant seeds 4, a soil

substance 6 and a plant growing ar a 8. Th greetings card 2 also comprises a miniature tool in the form of a miniature spade 10.

The greetings card 2 is such that in use the plant seeds 4 are planted in the soil substance 6 in the plant growing area 8. As shown in Figure 4, the greetings card 2 has been opened from its closed position as shown in Figure 1 and the greetings card 2 forms an enhancing display for the plant growing area 8 and the plants 12 therein. The greetings card 2 and/or the plant growing area 8 are such that the watering of the soil substance 6 for plant growing purposes does not cause the greetings card 2 to decompose before the plants 12 have grown. The plants 12 may be flowering plants or non-flowering plants.

The plant seeds 4 are packed in a sealed seed container in the form of a sachet 14. The sachet 14 may be transparent so that the plant seeds 4 can be seen.

The soil substance may be any suitable and appropriate soil substance such for example as earth, compost, coconut hair, peat, moss or sand. Mixtures of such substances may also be employed. The soil substance 6 is shown in the form of a round tablet in Figures 2 and 3. If desired, the soil substance may

be contained in a sachet like the sachet 14 used for containing the plant seeds 4.

Figure 5 illustrates how the plant growing area 8 can be formed in a body portion 18 which can be secured, for example by an adhesive, to a foldable base 20. When the base 20 is folded, it has a lid portion 22 for closing the greetings card 2 and retaining the plant seeds 4, the soil substance 6 and the spade 10 in the plant growing area 8.

Messages on the greetings card can be printed on either face of the lid portion 22 or wherever else may be desired. Written messages may also be written on the greetings card 2 wherever desired, for example on either side of the lid portion 22. Various parts of the body portion 18 and/or the lid 2 may be printed with general garden views, scenic views or any other suitable and appropriate views in order to enhance the look of the greetings card 2 as it forms a background for the plants 12. Thus the entire greetings card 2 with the plants 12 may look like a miniature garden.

In the subsequent Figures, similar parts as in Figures 1 - 5 have been given the same reference numerals for ease of comparison and understanding.

Figures 6 - 11 show a second greetings card 2. Figure 6 is a front view of the greetings card 2 in a closed condition, and Figure 7 is a rear view of the

greetings card 2 in a closed condition. Figures 8, 9 and 10 show the greetings card 2 being opened out to form a three dimensional display. In this connection, it will be seen that the greetings card 2 has folding-out portions 24 which locate in slots 26. Figure 11 illustrates how the greetings card 2 can be formed. For simplicity of illustration, Figures 6 - 11 do not show the plant seeds 4 and the soil substance 6 but these can be the same as shown in Figures 1 - 5 or they can be different.

Figures 12 - 15 show a third greetings card 2. Figure 12 shows the greetings card 2 in a closed condition. Figure 13 shows the greetings card 2 in an exploded form and it will be seen that the greetings card 2 has a body portion 28 and a lid 30. The body portion 28 contains the plant growing area 8. The sachet 14 and the soil substance 6 are provided in a separate box 32 which has a peel back cover 34. All a recipient has to do is to slide the box 32 out of the body portion 28, peel back the cover 34 and then slide the box 32 back into the body portion 28, see Figure 14. Plant growing as illustrated in Figure 15 can then take place. Alternatively, the peel-back cover 34 may also be a plastic lid, for example a clear plastic lid, which is removed and discarded.

Figure 16 shows a fourth greetings card 2 which is somewhat similar to the greetings card 2 shown in Figures 12 - 15. In Figure 16, the soil substance 6 is in a bag 36 made of a plastics material. The bag 36 is such that a hole 38 can be cut in the top of the bag 36. The bag 36 in its holder 40 can then be slid into the body portion 28 as shown in Figure 16. Plant growing can then take place and the greetings card 2 will then look similar to the greetings card 2 shown in Figure 15.

Figures 17 - 20 show a fifth greetings card 2. Figure 17 shows a greetings card 2 closed and Figures 18, 19 and 20 show the greetings card 2 in various stages of being opened. As can be seen, the greetings card 2 has fold-out portions 24 which locate in slots 26 in the lid 30.

Figure 21 shows a body portion 18 like that shown in Figure 5. It will be seen that the body portion 18 is able to receive a disc shaped container 42 for holding the soil substance 6 and water applied to the soil substance 6.

Figure 22 shows an arrangement similar to that shown in Figure 21 except that the container 42 has a lip 44.

Figure 23 illustrates how the plant growing area 8 may be formed as an aperture which goes entirely

through the body portion 18. Figure 24 shows an alternative arrangement in which the plant growing area 8 is formed as a depression in the body portion 18 and not as an aperture which extends completely through the width of the body portion 18.

It is to be appreciated that the embodiments of the invention described above with reference to the accompanying drawings have been given by way of example only and that modifications may be effected. Thus, for example, the greetings card 2 can be formed from a wide variety of materials in many different ways in order to give many different types of displays. The greetings card of the present invention may be used for the retail market, card and gift shops, garden centres, museums, department stores and other suitable and appropriate establishments. The greetings cards may be used for advertising and promotional gifts, for corporate incentive gifts, or simply to enable one person to send a greeting to another person. Where containers such as the container 42 are employed to hold the soil substrate, then the body portion holding the container 44 may be made of any suitable and appropriate materials including open-cell or closed-cell foams.

CLAIMS

1. A greetings card which comprises plant seeds, a soil substance, and a plant growing area, the greetings card being such that in use the plant seeds are planted in the soil substance in the plant growing area and are grown in the plant growing area whereby the greetings card forms an enhancing display for the plant growing area and the plants therein, and the greetings card and/or the plant growing area being such that watering of the soil substance for plant growing purposes does not cause the greetings card to decompose before the plants have grown.
2. A greetings card according to claim 1 in which the plant seeds are seeds for flowering plants and/or non-flowering plants.
3. A greetings card according to claim 1 or claim 2 in which the seeds are packed in a sealed seed container.
4. A greetings card according to claim 3 in which the sealed seed container is a sealed sachet.

5. A greetings card according to any one of the preceding claims in which the soil substance is one or more of earth, compost, coconut hair, peat, moss and sand.
6. A greetings card according to any one of claims 1-4 in which the soil substance is a compressed dried soil substance which becomes suitable for growing the plants when it is provided with water, and which expands in volume when it receives the water.
7. A greetings card according to claim 6 in which the compressed soil substance is in the form of one or more tablets.
8. A greetings card according to any one of the preceding claims in which the soil substance is in a bag made of a plastics material, the bag being such that a hole can be cut in the bag whereupon the bag becomes a suitable receptacle from which to grow the plants.

9. A greetings card according to any one of claims 1-7 in which the soil substance is packed in a sealed soil substance container.

10. A greetings card according to claim 9 in which the sealed soil substance container is a sachet.

11. A greetings card according to any one of the preceding claims in which the plant growing area is a recess in a body part of the greetings card.

12. A greetings card according to claim 11 in which the recess is lined with a plastics or metal foil material.

13. A greetings card according to any one of the preceding claims and which is made of card, a heavy weight paper-board, or a plastics material.

14. A greetings card according to any one of the preceding claims and which is made of a material which can be printed on and/or written on.

15. A greetings card according to any one of the preceding claims and which is provided with a water-resistant covering at least on its side adjacent the plant growing area.
16. A greetings card according to any one of the preceding claims and which is able to give a three dimensional display whilst the plants are growing.
17. A greetings card according to claim 16 and which has fold-out portions which are folded out to be able to give the three dimensional display.
18. A greetings card according to any one of the preceding claims and including at least one gardening tool.
19. A greetings card according to claim 18 in which the greetings card includes at least one of a miniature spade, a miniature rake and miniature shears.
20. A greetings card substantially as herein described with reference to the accompanying drawings.



Application No: GB 9514796.3
Claims searched: 1-20

Examiner: Graham Russell
Date of search: 11 September 1996

Patents Act 1977
Search Report under Section 17

Databases searched:

UK Patent Office collections, including GB, EP, WO & US patent specifications, in:

UK Cl (Ed.O): B6A (ADE)

Int Cl (Ed.6): B42D 15/04

Other: Online: WPI

Documents considered to be relevant:

Category	Identity of document and relevant passage	Relevant to claims
X	EP 0514811 A1 (COLUMBO) see column 2 lines 13-49	1,3-5,14
X	WO 94/00975 A1 (PORET) see abstract	1,3-5, 12,14
X	US 5158809 (PROCTOR) see column 2 lines 35-48	1,3-7, 11-15
X	US 4418497 (MASTRIANO) see column 2 lines 41-65	1,3,4,13, 14,16,17

X	Document indicating lack of novelty or inventive step	A	Document indicating technological background and/or state of the art.
Y	Document indicating lack of inventive step if combined with one or more other documents of same category.	P	Document published on or after the declared priority date but before the filing date of this invention.
&	Member of the same patent family	E	Patent document published on or after, but with priority date earlier than, the filing date of this application.